

REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Examiner's comments in the Advisory Action mailed on August 8, 2006, and submit the following remarks and adds new claim 15. Applicants request that the Examiner consider the following remarks and all pending claims, prior to examining the above-referenced patent application after RCE. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-14 in the subject application. Claims 1-15 (1 independent claim; 15 total claims) remain pending in the application. Support for the amendments may be found in the originally-filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Katayama (USP 5,915,066). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Katayama. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner maintains the rejections as outlined in the Final Office Action. After reviewing the Examiner's comments provided in the Advisory Action in response to the Applicant's arguments, Applicants respectfully assert that the Examiner has not provided sufficient support to maintain the rejections. In fact, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner appears to have actually provided reasons that support the Applicants' previously submitted arguments, while maintaining the rejections.

In reply to the Final Office Action, Applicants specifically argued that in the embodiment associated with Figure 6 of Katayama, Katayama explicitly discloses that "a mute state is set for the audio output of audio channel 1 during the remaining reproduction period (t10 to t20) . . .". Thereafter, "[t]he audio output of audio channel 2 is output (t20) . . ." (see col. 8, lines 1-9 of Katayama). Therefore, Katayama has only been found to disclose that the audio output of audio channel 1 is muted from t10 to t20 as shown in Figure 6.

Accordingly, Katayama fails to disclose a mute section for muting the audio output of channel 2 (first audio signal) when the system controller 15 switches the audio output of channel 1 (second audio signal) to the audio output of channel 2 (first audio signal). Therefore, Katayama does not disclose or teach at least " . . . a mute section for muting the

first audio signal which is output from the audio signal switch section when the audio signal switch section switches the second audio signal to the first audio signal,” (emphasis added) as recited by independent claim 1.

In responding to Applicants’ arguments, the Examiner argues in the Advisory Action that “the Examiner disagrees . . . Katayama further discloses a mute state is set for the audio output of audio channel 1 during remaining reproduction period (see col. 8 lines 3-9)”. Therefore, by the Examiner's very own admission, Katayama discloses a mute state is set for the audio output of audio channel 1 (second audio signal) during the remaining reproduction period (t10 to t20). Accordingly, Applicants assert that the Examiner's very own admission actually support Applicants’ previous arguments submitted in reply to the Final Office Action that, in Katayama, the audio output of audio channel 1 (second audio signal) is muted from t10 to t20. In contrast, claim 1 clearly recites “a mute section for muting the first audio signal . . .” (emphasis added).

Claims 2-14 depend from independent claim 1, so Applicants assert that claims 2-14 are differentiated from the cited reference for the same reasons as set forth above, in addition to their own respective features.

New dependent claim 15 recites, “the mute section only mutes the first audio signal which is output from the audio signal switch section when the audio signal switch section switches the second audio signal to the first audio signal”. Claim 15 is adequately supported in the originally filed specification. For example, with reference to Figure 1, the specification discloses that when the output signal switch circuit 108 switches the audio signal 128A, the audio signal 128B or the audio signal 130 (i.e. second audio signals) to the audio signal 126 or the external audio signal 124 (i.e. first audio signals), the audio mute circuit 106 mutes the audio signal 126 or the external audio signal 124 (i.e. first audio signals) output from the audio output terminal 112 (see page 10, lines 25-31).

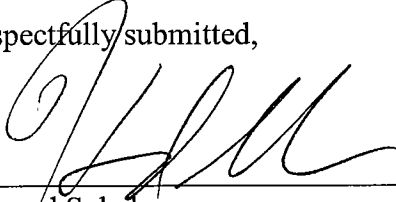
Accordingly, Katayama does not disclose or suggest at least that the mute section only mutes the first audio signal, as recited in new claim 15. Moreover, claim 15 depends from independent claim 1, so Applicants assert that claim 15 is differentiated from the cited reference for the same reasons as set forth above, in addition to its own respective features.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is thus requested. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. **19-2814**. Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner has any questions whatsoever regarding this Reply or the present application in general.

Respectfully submitted,

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